

In the claims:

Please cancel, without prejudice, claims 1-19 and 22.

1-19. **(Cancelled)**

20. **(Currently amended)** A method of screening for compounds that bind to a *patched* protein, said method comprising:

(a) combining a candidate compound with a cell comprising an expression cassette further comprising (i) a transcriptional initiation region, (ii) a transcriptional termination region, and (iii) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the *patched* protein under the transcriptional regulation of said transcriptional initiation region and said transcriptional termination region, wherein said nucleic acid sequence (I) encodes the patched protein, which patched protein is present expressed in the membrane of said cell and (II) hybridizes under stringent conditions, including a wash step of 0.2X SSC at 65 °C, to the nucleic acid sequence represented in ~~SEQ ID NO: 9 or SEQ ID NO: 18~~, and wherein the *patched* protein can bind to a hedgehog polypeptide; and

(b) assaying for the binding of said candidate compound to ~~said the~~ *patched* protein.

21-22. **(Cancelled)**

23. **(Previously presented)** The method of claim 20, wherein said cell is a mammalian cell.

24. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 20, wherein the *patched* protein is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence represented in ~~SEQ ID NO: 9 or SEQ ID NO: 18~~.

25. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 20, wherein the *patched* protein comprises an amino acid sequence represented in ~~SEQ ID NO: 10 or SEQ ID NO: 19~~.